

c¹
an annular space formed between said valve guide and said valve member, said annular space providing a contact area between the valve member and the valve seat which is bounded on one side by a step adjoined by a guide surface wherein a distance between said valve stem and said guide surface is greater than a distance from said valve stem and said step.

c²
15. (Amended) A valve system, comprising:
a valve member having a valve stem;
a valve housing containing said valve stem and a valve seat;
a valve spring providing a biasing force in a first direction against said valve stem;
an activation device which, when activated, provides a force in a second direction opposite to said first direction to axially move said valve stem;
a valve guide for guiding said valve stem in said valve housing;
a contact area formed between the valve member and the valve seat, said contact area being bounded on one side by a step which is adjoined by a guide surface, said guide surface being located radially further from said valve stem than said step.

(A copy of the marked-up version of amended claims 8 and 15 are attached to this Amendment.)

Please add new claim 22 as follows:

-- 22. (NEW) An electrically actuated valve comprising:

a valve stem holding a valve member interacting with a valve seat on a valve housing;

a valve spring providing a force in a first direction on said valve stem and said valve member;

a valve guide for guiding said valve stem in an inner circumferential opening of said valve housing;

C³ an activating device which, when actuated provides a force in a direction opposite said first direction to axially move said valve stem and said valve member in said circumferential opening of said valve housing wherein said valve member interacts with said valve seat on said valve housing to thereby determine flow through said valve and;

wherein said valve member has a step portion formed at a portion of said valve member having a radius which exceeds a radius of said inner circumferential opening of said valve housing and wherein said step portion is adjoined by a guide surface positioned at a radius greater than said radius of said step and wherein said step and said adjoining guide surface defines one side of a contact area between the valve member and the valve seat. --
